

THE NEW ZEALAND BRAVERY STAR (N.Z.B.S.)

Taufui Aevalu PAEA

Date of action: 6 December 2004

Date of award: 3 May 2008

Citation

On the morning of 6 December 2004 in Glenfield, Auckland, Mr Paea's neighbour was brutally murdered by her estranged partner, who had been on the run from the Police for a number of weeks.

The offender arrived at the woman's home while she was getting out of her car and helping her two year old daughter out of a car seat. The offender approached, and after talking to the woman for a short time, their conversation turned into a heated argument. The offender began to assault the woman who managed to break free. The offender caught up with her and began stabbing her in the back and shoulders. The victim managed to struggle free again and this time ran to the front door of Mr Paea's house.

The offender caught up to the victim at Mr Paea's front door and both of them fell through it into the hallway. Mr Paea, aged 67, who was in the kitchen at the time, rushed into the hallway to find the offender straddling the victim and stabbing her in the neck, shoulders, and stomach. He called out to the offender to "stop", but was ignored. Mr Paea then tackled the offender, wrapping his arms around him and trying to pull him off the victim. The offender pushed Mr Paea away causing him to fall onto the victim. As he tried to stand up, the offender stabbed him in the left cheek causing a deep puncture wound that later required five stitches and a brief period of hospitalisation.

Mr Paea, wounded and in shock, managed to escape from the offender's attentions, left the house, alerted another neighbour and asked them to call the Police. He then returned to his home to save his wife and grandchildren, who were in the lounge. His wife managed to pass the two children out of the window and he took them to a place of safety before returning to his home yet again to get his wife and see if he could assist the victim.

As he approached the house he met the offender, who was leaving carrying two knives. Seeing Mr Paea coming towards him, the offender jumped over a fence, ran through a neighbouring property to his car and drove away. Mr Paea entered his home to find his wife safe, but the other woman had since died, having received some thirty stab wounds.

Although he was unsuccessful in saving the life of the victim, Mr Paea showed exceptional bravery in attempting to do so by tackling the armed offender at considerable risk to his own life. He also displayed bravery, presence of mind and determination in alerting a neighbour to the situation and by returning to his home to ensure the safety of his wife and grandchildren and to see if he could provide any further assistance to the victim.